

The Formation of Stars and Planets

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New stars are constantly forming in our Galaxy. Enshrouded by the dust and gas from which they form, much of the activity is hidden from view. Infrared and millimeter wavelength telescopes let us peer through the veil. An emerging paradigm explains much of the process by which stars and planets form. Striking new images from the Hubble Space Telescope provide textbook validation. The theory predicts that planets should be commonplace around stars like our own Sun. Fostered by technological advances, the hunt for planets around nearby stars has begun. The next five years should see the detection of a Jupiter-like planet, the next 30 years the detection of an Earth-like planet.